

# **Assisting Constituents in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District**

*Frank LoBiondo*

## **Conservation Technical Assistance**

### **Technical Assistance for Saving Water and Farms**

With NRCS technical assistance, farmers in the townships of Hammonton and Carney's Point installed 75 acres of trickle irrigation on their blueberry and Asian pear farms. Irrigation and water management practices in New Jersey were very much needed in 2001 for farm survival and for productive yields. Without irrigation on sandy soils in South Jersey, growers who farmed fall vegetables and tree fruit would have been seriously affected. Irrigation practices that were implemented in 2001, as well as the proceeding years, will be beneficial to the growers as insurance against future drought risks. Additionally, these water conservation practices benefit the region by protecting water supplies.

### **NRCS Helping Farmers Protect Water Quality**

NRCS provided technical assistance to three dairy farmers in Pilesgrove Township to install animal waste storage facilities. The storage facilities will allow the farmers to safely store the manure during the winter months when the ground is frozen. The manure will be spread at a more optimum time of the year, minimizing runoff and allowing for better nutrient management. A farmer in Upper Deerfield Township installed 450 feet of grassed waterway to protect 15 acres from excessive erosion and, in turn, from water quality degradation.

### **Protecting Water Quality on Preserved Farmland**

Farms receiving funding under the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program are required to develop a conservation plan. Accordingly, NRCS staff provided technical assistance to a farmer in the State program to install 8,000 feet of fence in Lower Alloways Creek. The fencing will keep livestock from entering a stream and sensitive wetland areas on the farm. In addition to protecting the natural resources on the farm, this fence also helps the farmer to better manage the pastures by rotating the animals and avoiding over grazing.

### **Conservation Education and Outreach**

All members of the New Jersey Conservation Partnership are actively engaged in public education and outreach. Conservation education and direct assistance to the public are ongoing priorities in your Congressional District and throughout the state.

## **Conservation Programs**

### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) / State Conservation Cost Share Program (CCSP)**

*NRCS provides technical assistance for conservation projects funded by the State CCSP. NRCS staff time is funded through its Conservation Technical Assistance allocations.*

- **Protecting Water Quality by Managing Animal Waste and Farm Chemicals**

- √ In District 2, Federal EQIP funding totaled \$283,721 for 44 projects. NRCS and the local Soil Conservation Districts provided technical assistance for these projects, which included the following:  
Three dairy farmers installed waste storage facilities. The storage facilities will allow the farmers to store the manure during the winter months when the ground is frozen and covered with snow, and spread it at a more optimum time of the year. This will minimize runoff, protecting water quality.
- √ An agricultural chemical handling facility in Hopewell Township will help protect the health and safety of farm workers while protecting groundwater from agricultural chemical spills.
- √ NRCS and Soil Conservation District staff assisted with implementation of 1,925 acres of integrated crop management (ICM). With ICM, farmers are able to better balance their fertilizer and pesticide usage to meet their crop needs. This improves water quality and helps the producers to reduce their farm costs.

## **Soil Erosion and Stormwater Control Provided in Developing Areas**

The NJ Conservation Partnership helps growing communities protect their soil resources from erosion. Through the State Soil Conservation Committee's erosion and sediment control regulatory program, the Soil Conservation Districts serving District 2 review and certify proposed development plans for soil erosion control before and after construction. They also review plans for stormwater control and issue permits. Local inspectors check compliance to ensure natural resource conservation on development sites.

## **Resource Conservation and Development**

### **Buckshutem Wildlife Management Area**

The South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) has been working with local partners on a redevelopment plan for the State-owned Buckshutem Wildlife Management Area in Cumberland County. The project, which involves removing woody vegetation and reseeding for warm season grasses and forage, began this March, with a groundbreaking ceremony to take place on March 30. The estimated cost is \$5,000 per acre. Yet, nearly the entire cost of this project, to total between 400 and 800 acres, will be borne by the contractor, giving South Jersey outstanding wildlife habitat with little expense to the taxpayer.

### **Upper Cohansey River Watershed Management Project**

South Jersey RC&D is working with the Cumberland County Soil Conservation District, NJ Department of Agriculture's State Soil Conservation Committee, and other partners to enhance water quality through public adoption of conservation and best management practices. Water chemistry and other river parameters will be monitored and evaluated at four locations in the Upper Cohansey River Watershed. RC&D and partners will monitor the impact of a nursery on water quality. Conservation practices will be encouraged to help remediate problem areas when identified.

---

For more information about these and other conservation issues in the 2nd District, contact the Burlington County SCD: (609) 267-7410; Cape-Atlantic SCD: (609) 625-3144; Cumberland County SCD: (856) 451-2422; Gloucester County SCD: (856) 589-5250; Salem County SCD: (856) 769-1124 or NRCS Hainesport Service Center: (609) 267-0811; NRCS Woodstown Service Center: (856) 769-1126; NRCS Vineland Service Center: (856) 205-1225. State level contacts are the SSCC: (609) 292-5540; NJACD: (973) 398-2511; NRCS: (732) 246-1171.